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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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Professor Charles S. Smith of George Washington University has sent to me the following extracts from the inaugural address of Dr. Harry A. Garfield, President of Williams College, on October 7, published in the Princeton Alumni Weekly of October 14:

To adopt as a plank in our educational platform the statement which I have ventured to formulate concerning the college ("the chief end of the American college is to train to citizenship") does not lessen the difficulty, for citizenship of the kind described is possible only among men whose minds are well trained and broadly cultivated, and whose view of life is generous as well as clear. It therefore follows that those subjects should be taught which train the several aptitudes and powers of the mind. Extensive knowledge cannot take the place of intensive training. While all subjects lend themselves to this result, some are more suitable than others. Experience has proved the value of language, mathematics, philosophy and science. . . . Therefore every college student should be required to take courses in each of these general fields or groups. Breadth of training makes a balanced man, and balance is as essential to intellectual progress as to walking. It is a condition precedent to success to the scholar as well as to the citizen. . . .

That some subjects produce better results than others in the same general group is due rather to the accident of time and to perfection of method than to qualities inherent in the subjects. Consider, for example, the teaching of Greek. Both the language and the method of instruction have been standardized, if I may borrow a term from the shops. This result has come about in part because the language is dead, thereby lending itself to fixed methods of analysis and treatment, and in part because it has been studied long enough since its revival to enable teachers to agree upon the authors to be read and the order in which their work can most profitably be placed before the student.

These considerations give to Greek, as to Latin, a peculiar claim to consideration as a discipline, wholly aside from the question of literary quality and historic value. A like result, so far as intellectual training is concerned, may be obtained in the teaching of a modern language, but with far greater difficulty. Methods of teaching, the substance and extent of courses, differ so widely that in reducing the results to a common basis for classroom work serious loss is inevitable. Furthermore, the outcry that is heard when a modern language is thoroughly taught raises the suspicion that opposition to classics is largely due to the very thing

which commends them to the educator, namely, their value as training subjects. If modern languages are to be treated as substitutes for the classics in any real sense, they must be studied with the same degree of attention to grammatical construction and composition that is required of the student of Latin and Greek, subject only to such differences as arise because of the fact that they are still spoken languages. To those who advocate the substitution solely on the ground that French and German are useful languages and that thoroughness is less essential than facility, I have only to repeat that the college is not a vocational school and that mastery of one's mental processes is more important than fullness of knowledge and ease of expression.

President Garfield was for five years Professor of Politics in Princeton University. The views above expressed are, therefore, of particular interest and encouragement to classical teachers because such a man would naturally be more closely drawn to the scientific side of culture than to the literary side. He is in strict agreement with the position of President Wilson as stated in his address before the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland last fall. This position is being taken more and more by purely scientific men themselves, and it looks very much as if the opposition to the Classics that may be expected in the future will proceed from those who are qualified to talk neither by cultural nor by scientific training. It is unfortunately the case that the world is apt to give most consideration to those who present it with the least difficult proposition, and those who advocate the emasculation of education so as to deprive it of the labor necessary for genuine value will find great support among the unthinking. So much the more, therefore, should we ourselves unite to maintain our vocation in its most vigorous form, being assured that in the eyes of those who are justly qualified we have nothing to gain and everything to lose by reducing our standards or going too far in the popularization of our subject. Classical training is not easy, is not for every mind, but for those who are capable of receiving it it is still the best instrument for mental development.

G. L.